

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE
& COMMERCE**
2020 ANNUAL REPORT



**MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE AND
COMMERCE**

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SOCIAL MEDIA



COVER PHOTO CREDIT:

Jason Jones, Sr. (Photo taken in Cleveland, MS)

MISSISSIPPI AG FACTS

PRODUCTION VALUE

\$7.35 BILLION FOR 2020

FARMS

34,700 IN MISSISSIPPI

ACREAGE

**10.4 MILLION FARM ACRES IN
MISSISSIPPI**

CATFISH

**35,100 WATER ACRES IN
MISSISSIPPI**

FOREST

**19.7 MILLION FOREST ACRES IN
MISSISSIPPI**

NATIONALLY

**MISSISSIPPI RANKS IN THE TOP 20
IN PRODUCTION OF 10 COMMODITIES**

WORKFORCE

**17.4% OF THE STATE'S WORKFORCE
IS EMPLOYED IN JOBS RELATED
DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO
AGRICULTURE**

Source: Mississippi State University

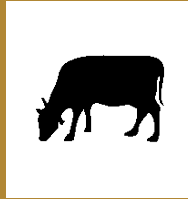
MISSISSIPPI TOP 10

Mississippi's top commodities, based on cash receipts



1. Broilers & Eggs

The value of poultry produced in Mississippi in 2020 was \$2.15 billion. Mississippi ranks #5 in the U.S. in broiler production.



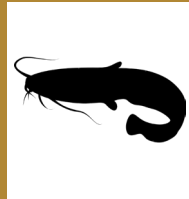
6. Cattle

The value of production of cattle in 2020 was \$261 million. Mississippi had 920,000 head of cattle on 15,980 farms.



2. Soybeans

The value of soybeans products produced in Mississippi in 2020 was \$1.21 billion. Mississippi ranks #12 in the U.S. in soybean production.



7. Catfish

The value of catfish produced in Mississippi in 2020 was \$226 million. Mississippi ranks #1 in the U.S. in farm-raised catfish production.



3. Forestry

The value of forestry produced in Mississippi in 2020 was \$1.12 billion. Mississippi ranks #3 in the U.S. in pulpwood production.



8. Hay

The value of production of hay in 2020 was \$140 million. Mississippi harvested 620,000 acres, producing 1.48 million tons of hay.



4. Cotton

The value of cotton production in 2020 was \$491 million. Mississippi ranks #3 in the United States in cotton and cottonseed production.



9. Rice

The value of rice production in 2020 was \$138 million. Mississippi ranks #6 in the United States in rice production.



5. Corn

The value of production of corn in 2020 was \$387 million. Mississippi produced 88 million bushels of corn on 1,427 farms.



10. Horticulture Crops

The value of horticulture crops produced in Mississippi in 2020 was \$106 million. Horticulture value production has increased \$2 million.

Source: Mississippi State University

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A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER ANDY GIPSON

It is with great enthusiasm that I present you with the 2020 Annual Report of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC). As you read through this report, I hope you gain a better understanding of the diverse role that MDAC plays in promoting agriculture as well as protecting the largest industry in the state and each of you, the consumer. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce touches the lives of all Mississippians, not just those directly involved in production agriculture.

New challenges arose this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the time of shutdowns, agriculture never stopped. I am proud that MDAC continued to offer our routine services ensuring fairness and equity in the marketplace during this time, while expanding our functions and programs as a response to the challenges felt by producers and consumers. The COVID-19 Response section outlines the many efforts of the Department to assist producers and consumers including the development of the Mississippi Farm Marketplace and working with the Mississippi Land, Water and Timber Resources Board to expand capacity of USDA-inspected livestock processing facilities.

I am proud of the Department's accomplishments this year. In addition to responding to the pandemic, the agency has implemented new programs to assist farmers, ranchers, and landowners such as the Wild Hog Control Program, Ag Workforce Development Program, and expanded efforts to increase export of Mississippi commodities including timber and forestry products.

At the Department, we will continue to strive for excellence in the support and promotion of Mississippi agriculture. You can learn more about your Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce by visiting our website at www.mdac.ms.gov.

Sincerely,



Andy Gipson, Commissioner



In addition to overseeing the responsibilities of the Department, duties of the Commissioner of Agriculture include leadership through services on the following boards:

- Chairman, Mississippi Fair Commission
- Mississippi Board of Animal Health
- Mississippi Central Farmers' Market Board
- Chairman, Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Permit Board
- Mississippi Land, Water, and Timber Resources Board
- Mississippi Egg Marketing Board
- Southern U.S. Trade Association
- State Seed Board
- State Soil & Water Conservation Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The responsibilities of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) are multifaceted. The mission of MDAC is to promote and regulate agricultural-related businesses within the state and to promote Mississippi's products throughout the state and the rest of the world for the benefit of all Mississippi citizens.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The Market Development Division is responsible for promoting Mississippi's agricultural products and agricultural-related businesses statewide and worldwide through programs such as the Certified Farmers Market Program, Agritourism Registration Program, Farm-to-School Program, and the *Mississippi Market Bulletin*. The Mississippi Farmers Market provides farmers, specialty food processors, and artisans with a convenient, affordable location to sell their locally grown and produced items directly to the consumer.

- The Division received \$425,843.26 in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds from USDA to promote the specialty crop industry in the state. Since its inception in 2006, MDAC has received \$4,218,759.34 from USDA in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds.
- Seventeen schools were awarded school garden grants.
- The Genuine MS program increased its membership by 93 members.
- MDAC administers the Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) Cost-Share Program to reimburse farmers for 75% of the cost (up to \$500) incurred to obtain the GAP/GHP food safety certification. Due to increased costs at USDA, MDAC was able to increase the reimbursement rate to 75% (up to \$750) at the beginning of 2020. Sixteen reimbursements were granted.

MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURAL & LIVESTOCK THEFT BUREAU

The Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau (MALTB) enforces laws to prevent agriculture-related thefts. The Bureau investigates theft involving agribusiness, including timber theft, equipment theft, chemical theft, and livestock theft. MALTB also handles the registration of all livestock brands in the state.

- The Bureau investigated 177 cases with a reported value of over \$1,254,451.
- Property valued at \$635,582 was recovered.

MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY MUSEUM

The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, the educational arm of the Department, creates an environment that communicates the value of past and present Mississippi agricultural lifestyles, relationships, and practices and their relevance to people's everyday lives. The Museum tells the story of Mississippi's agricultural history through indoor and outdoor exhibits and events.

- The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum completed construction of the Children Barnyard and Multi-Purpose building.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) protects the agricultural and horticultural interests of Mississippi from harmful insects, diseases, and weeds. The Bureau is also responsible for registering pesticides, feeds, seeds, fertilizers, and soil amendments sold in the state, as well as, permitting all pest control operators throughout the state.

- BPI administers approximately 31 programs, which includes Pesticide and Environmental Programs; Structural Pest Control Programs; Incidents and Complaints; Feed, Seed, Fertilizer, Lime, Soil, and Plant Amendment Regulatory; and Testing, Horticulture, Apiary, and Plant Pest Quarantine.
- BPI registered 31,378 feed, fertilizer, lime, and pesticide products; registered 1,595 feed, fertilizer, lime manufacturers, and distributors; collected 7,309 pesticide, seed, feed, fertilizer, and lime samples; certified 956 nurseries and nursery dealers; and conducted 1,210 nursery and dealer inspections.
- BPI certified 41,913 bee colonies and permitted 97,554 bee colonies in Mississippi.

BUREAU OF REGULATORY SERVICES

The Bureau of Regulatory Services is responsible for the various regulatory functions of the Department, which extend from on-farm production to processing and retail markets. Regulatory Service inspectors conduct sanitation inspections of grocery stores and meat plants to ensure the adherence to food safety regulations. They are also responsible for the certification of gas pumps and verification of weights and measures.

- Weights & Measures Division tested 4,815 devices/scales.
- Consumer Protection Division issued 1,608 retail food establishment licenses and conducted 4,155 retail food sanitation inspections.
- Meat Inspection Division inspected over 66 million pounds of red meat and poultry products.
- Petroleum Products Inspection Division inspected 55,827 registered devices and obtained 1,440 fuel samples at 2,672 retail establishments.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DIVISION

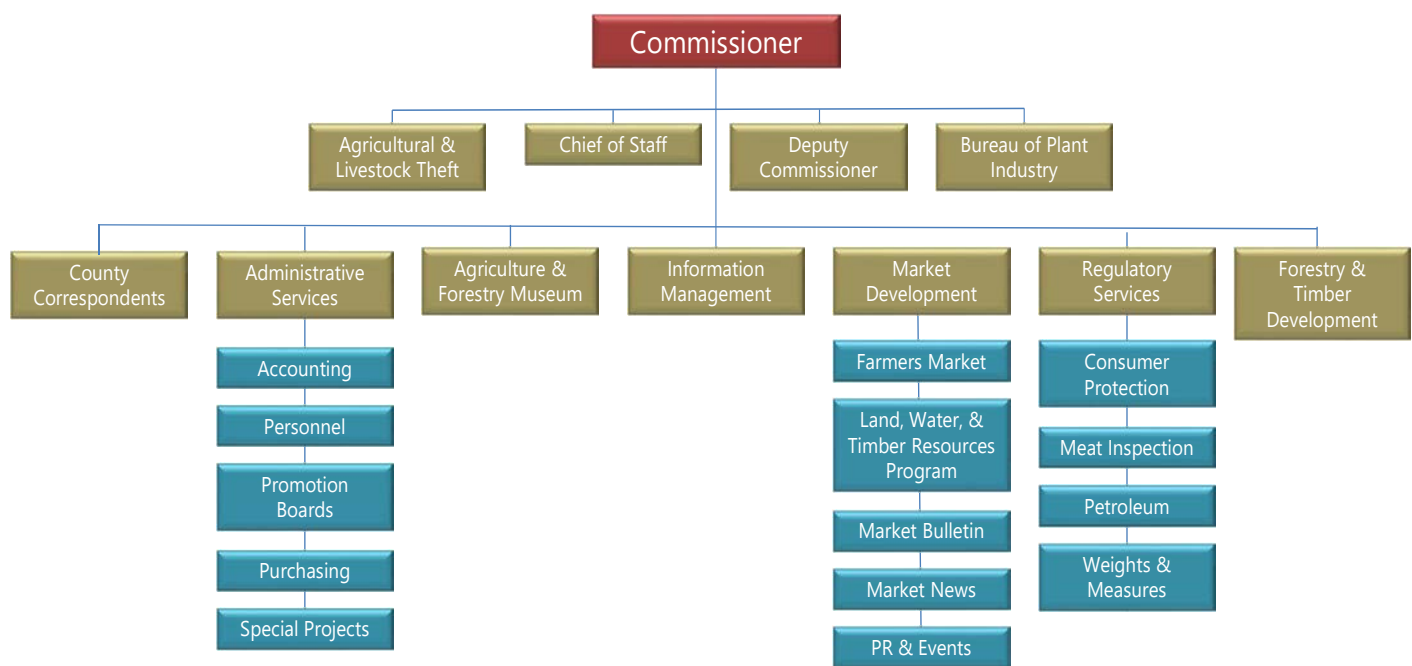
The Information Management Division (IMD) is primarily responsible for providing information technology and services to all employees of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Also, IMD provides technical and network support, application development and systems support, and strategic planning services for both the Mississippi Board of Animal Health and the Mississippi State Fair Commission.

- IMD modernized the agency's Microsoft Windows environment, including updating Microsoft Office from 2010 to Office 365, moving email from on-premise to cloud, and updating operating systems for all computers from Windows 7 to Windows 10.
- IMD provided Microsoft Office 365 training for all employees.
- Provided support for teleworking during COVID-19 including purchasing hardware, issuing laptops, setting up virtual meetings, providing VPN access to office files, and providing remote support
- Consolidated equipment to a 90% virtual server environment.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE



The mission of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is to promote and regulate agriculture-related businesses in the state and promote Mississippi's products throughout the state and the rest of the world for the benefit of all Mississippi citizens.



ADMINISTRATION

Andy Gipson - Commissioner
Brian Perry - Chief of Staff
Adam Choate - Deputy Commissioner

MDAC COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic made 2020 a challenging year for many Mississippi producers. When COVID-19 began to impact Mississippi, farmers were beginning the planting season. MDAC immediately began taking measures to allow agriculture producers to continue producing food and fiber without interruptions. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce remained in operation. While many staff members teleworked, the Department continued its routine services, such as meat inspections, seed testing, and consumer protection responsibilities. MDAC staff members stayed in contact with state and federal agencies – USDA, FDA, EPA, MEMA, MSDH, and the CDC – for the latest updates and monitored the situation to prevent market disruptions when possible.

Many proactive initiatives were put in place to promote the industry and protect consumers. One of the first actions was the development of a COVID-19 Task Force at MDAC. Serving as strategists and liaisons between internal and external stakeholders, the Task Force consisted of MDAC bureau directors and was established to create tactics and protocols for the Department to serve the needs of Mississippians by ensuring that commerce continued while protecting employee and public health.

Keeping the public informed is a priority of the Department. A COVID-19 web page keeps the public informed of measures taken by the Department as well as opportunities available for assistance. MDAC published a list of all the farmers markets in Mississippi that were open during the pandemic so consumers could access to local foods. As an interest in home gardening was renewed among consumers, MDAC promoted home gardening by providing the public with tips and information sheets.

MDAC took steps to assist producers, so farmers and ranchers could continue operating. MDAC's Bureau of Plant Industry worked with MSU Extension Service to revise the protocol for private pesticide applicator certifications. MDAC and MSU Extension Service also developed an online Private Applicator Certification program to provide more efficient and timely access to training as an alternative to in-person trainings, which were suspended due to COVID-19.

"Milk dumping" due to a milk surplus after the closures of schools, restaurants and other food service providers, became a nationwide issue. To combat this issue in Mississippi, Commissioner Gipson wrote a letter to retail grocers urging them to discontinue the practice of limiting the amount of milk products consumers can purchase.

During the onset of the pandemic, consumers demonstrated a renewed interest in purchasing and eating local products. The Mississippi Farmers Market remained in operation, implementing safety precautions. In order to connect consumers to the local farm products they so desire, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce developed the Mississippi Farm Marketplace, an online platform where farmers list their farm products for sale to the public. Within a week of the Mississippi Farm Marketplace being public, the portal had 25,000 visitors, 72 farms participating, and 150 commodities listed.

MDAC COVID-19 RESPONSE CONTINUED

The increased demand for local products significantly impacted local meat processors and livestock producers. The growing demand for local meats led to processors becoming backlogged and producers being put on waiting lists to get livestock processed. Some producers were put on waiting lists that stretched as far as nine months. The Mississippi Land, Water and Timber (LWT) Resources Board made it a priority to increase the processing capacity of USDA-inspected meats in the state. Through the LWT program, grants and grant/loan combinations were made available to existing USDA-inspected processing plants for expansion and towards the development of new plants, which can potentially double the amount of USDA-inspected meat processed in the state.

Aware of the need (from the agriculture community) for guidance for essential workers to travel to conduct essential services during the time of emergency, MDAC provided a letter and guidance document for those engaged in essential work from the agriculture and commerce community to use during this emergency. These were readily available on the MDAC COVID-19 web page.

MDAC requested, and was approved by USDA, to increase the amount of reimbursement for growers participating in the Good Agriculture Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) cost-share program. The reimbursement maximum increased from \$500 to \$750.

In cooperation with Congressman Trent Kelly's Office, the MSU Extension Service, the National Guard, the Mississippi Department of Veteran's Affairs, and the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, MDAC launched the FARM Corps, an online portal that connects the agricultural community looking for workers (due to restrictions on migrant labor) to Mississippi servicemen and women seeking work.

MDAC filed various emergency temporary rules to ensure that there were no disruptions in commerce. Regulatory Services filed an emergency rule to extend the current fuel blend standards to avoid supply disruption for Mississippi and other states impacted by COVID-19. The Weights and Measures Inspection Division filed an emergency temporary rule to extend the inspection and testing schedule of weights and measures due between March 13, 2020, and June 30, 2020, from a 12-month period to a 24-month period. An emergency rule was filed to remove the limit of four owners per animal for livestock for custom slaughter.

In partnership with the Mississippi Development Authority Trade Office, MDAC hosted Director General Peter Chen of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office to thank Taiwan for the gift of 100,000 masks and an additional 10,000 N95 masks. The masks were delivered to MEMA for entry into the supply chain.

MDAC COVID-19 RESPONSE CONTINUED



Commissioner Andy Gipson proudly accepts personal protective face masks from leaders in Taiwan to support healthcare workers in Mississippi.

MDAC and the Board of Animal Health received cloth and KN95 masks from MEMA which were distributed to 15 poultry, nine catfish, and 44 meat processing facilities to ensure that all employees were equipped with PPE.

MDAC collaborated with Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. to donate 280,800 eggs to the Mississippi Food Network and Extra Table.

The Mississippi State Fairgrounds played a key role in the response to the pandemic. Through a partnership with MDAC and UMMC, the Mississippi State Fairgrounds was used as a drive-thru COVID-19 testing site. The old Trade Mart at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds was used as a PPE sanitation site.



MARKET DEVELOPMENT WORKING FOR YOU

The Market Development Division promotes Mississippi agriculture and the state's agricultural products across the state, nation, and world.

The Market Development Division is dedicated to promoting Mississippi's agriculture commodities and the farmers and ranchers who produce them. This is accomplished through participation in trade shows, conferences and

fairs, international trade, presentations to schools and civic organizations, promotion of local farmers markets, connecting with other agricultural organizations and commodity groups, and various other communication outlets. The Market Development Division consists of three main program areas: communications/outreach, promotional programs, and grants and cost-share programs.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED



COMMUNICATIONS / OUTREACH

The Market Development Division serves as the communications and outreach arm of the Department and is responsible for media and public relations.

The Market Development Division publishes the *Mississippi Market Bulletin*, a buy/sell newspaper for farmers to advertise their agricultural items that have been raised, grown, produced, or operated on their farms. The *Mississippi Market Bulletin* is a semi-monthly publication, published on the 1st and 15th of each month, with a circulation of nearly 33,000 in-state and out-of-state subscribers.

With a new digital update, paid subscribers of the *Mississippi Market Bulletin* can now enjoy online access to the current issue only 24 hours after it has been distributed via U.S. mail. This equalizes every subscriber's opportunity to view the classifieds and news at the same time, providing equal access to everyone despite where they receive their mail. Paid subscribers still receive the traditional printed version of the Mississippi Market Bulletin delivered by U.S. mail.



PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

The primary focus of the Market Development Division is the promotion of Mississippi agricultural products statewide, nationwide, and worldwide, in order to increase the purchase and consumption of products that are grown, raised, crafted, and made in the state. MDAC administers several programs that promote these agricultural products.

Mississippi Farm Marketplace

To further expand farm-to-table efforts, Commissioner Gipson announced the launch of the Mississippi Farm Marketplace. The Mississippi Farm Marketplace is an online market portal that gives farmers a place to list commodities they have for sale, while providing consumers a location to easily source local products. The portal can be accessed at MSFarmMarketplace.com, where commodities such as produce, meats, dairy products, honey, live animals for custom slaughter, eggs, aquaculture, seafood, and horticulture products can be located. The portal also contains a listing of available on-farm jobs.

Agritourism Limited Liability Registration Program

MDAC's Agritourism Limited Liability Registration Program provides limited liability and promotion to farms engaged in agritourism activities. There are 80 registered agritourism operations in the state.

Passport to Fun Program

The Passport to Fun program was funded by USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBGP). It was created to promote Mississippi agritourism by encouraging visitors to attend farms, pumpkin patches, museums, general stores, and other agriculture-related venues in the state. Visitors participated by taking their "passports" with them and getting them stamped at each venue. After exploring as many of the venues as they could, Passport to Fun participants mailed their "stamped" passport to MDAC by September 15, 2020.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

Farm-to-School

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce partners with the Mississippi Department of Education to promote the purchase of Mississippi-grown fruits and vegetables for the Department of Defense (DoD) Farm-to-School Program. During the 2019-2020 school year, \$351,155.49 of Mississippi produce items were purchased by schools across the state. MDAC has partnered with the Bower Foundation to reimburse farmers for the freezing and storage costs of fresh-frozen produce purchased through the program. For every \$1 that the Bower Foundation invested in the program, \$37 of Mississippi grown fresh-frozen fruits and vegetables were purchased and served to students across Mississippi. Farmers participating in the Farm-to-School Program utilized the Revolving Fund Program to receive their produce payments within five days of delivery.

Livestock and Grain Market News

The Livestock and Grain Market News Program is a federal/state cooperative agreement in conjunction with USDA. Fourteen livestock auction markets are reported by eight cross-trained Mississippi Board of Animal Health personnel. Prices collected from the fourteen sales represent 85 percent of all the livestock markets throughout the state. Livestock and grain pricing is collected and disseminated throughout the internet and radio five days a week. These prices are used by lending institutions, university agricultural economists, consultants, and livestock associations.

International Trade

MDAC works to create marketing opportunities for Mississippi's farmers and agribusinesses through international trade. MDAC is a member of the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA). SUSTA encompasses 14 Southern states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Its mission is to increase exports for U.S. agriculture products and high-value foods. MDAC works jointly with other state and federal agencies to collaborate and deliver accurate information for companies interested in exporting through site visits, research, and providing potential opportunities, such as SUSTA. Market Development staff serve as liaisons for SUSTA to promote opportunities available for Mississippi agriculture and value-added products, in addition to serving as activity managers for trade shows and missions. Trade shows give small companies the opportunity to have a larger presence by being branded under the SUSTA name and pavilion.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, promotion opportunities including FOOD EX Japan 2020 and the Summer Fancy Food Show in New York City were canceled. SIAL China 2020 was rescheduled for the fall of 2020, and MDAC staff served to assist SUSTA with adding virtual components available for Southern food and agricultural businesses to meet with foreign buyers without having to leave their home office.

Through MDAC's membership in SUSTA, Mississippi companies can take advantage of cost-share programs, allowing them to be reimbursed for eligible expenses incurred to reach new international markets.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

Certified Farmers Market Program

MDAC administers the Certified Farmers Market Program to promote farmers markets in the state with Mississippi farmers selling Mississippi produce and other agricultural products. There were 28 certified markets in 2020.



GENUINE MS



Genuine MS has four unique logos. With these, producers can label their products under the Grown, Raised, Crafted, or Made categories.

Genuine MS was developed by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce to identify and promote products proudly created or produced by Mississippi farmers, artisans, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers. The purpose of the Genuine MS program is to increase public awareness of Mississippi's farm, food, crafted and fabricated products by branding them as Genuine MS.

The website, GenuineMS.com, serves as a centralized location featuring members' products, while connecting consumers across the globe with the people and places that grow, raise, craft and make Genuine MS products. The program allows member companies to share their unique stories in an effort to increase consumer awareness of their products. Genuine MS shows state pride and keeps the economy strong.

There are four classifications of membership determined by members' products in the Genuine MS program — Grown, Raised, Crafted, and Made. The Genuine MS Grown classification consists of farmers who grow everything from produce, nuts, and row crops to horticulture and timber in Mississippi. The Genuine MS Raised classification consists of farmers, ranchers, and aquaculturists with animals and aquaculture products raised in Mississippi or those selling products from animals and aquaculture products raised in Mississippi. The Genuine MS Crafted classification consists of craftspeople whose products are hand-created in Mississippi from agricultural products, which includes specialty foods and beverages and pet and artisan products. The Genuine MS Made classification consists of manufacturers whose products are 51% or more manufactured in Mississippi to benefit agriculture.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

Genuine MS increased its membership by 93 members in fiscal year 2020. The program now consists of 206 members.

MDAC launched the Genuine MS Podcast, a 10-episode summer series hosted by Commissioner Andy Gipson. The series features Genuine MS farmers, ranchers, craftspeople, and manufacturers as they tell the stories behind their farms, businesses, and the unique products they offer.



GRANTS AND COST-SHARE PROGRAMS

The Market Development Division offers grant and cost-share programs to assist farmers and agribusinesses. Funding for these programs is made available through USDA rather than state funds.

Specialty Crop Block Grant

Through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Program, MDAC awarded \$425,843.26 to organizations to enhance the state's specialty crop industry. Eleven projects were awarded to universities and producer organizations to administer promotional efforts, educational workshops, and research projects in areas specifically related to sweet potatoes, blueberries, tomatoes, horticulture, honey, watermelons and various other fruit and vegetable crops. Thirty-seven projects are currently ongoing through this program.

GAP/GHP Cost-Share Program

MDAC administers the Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) Cost-Share Program to reimburse farmers for 75 percent of the cost (up to \$500) incurred to obtain the GAP/GHP food safety certification. MDAC was approved by USDA to increase the reimbursement rate to 75% (up to \$750) at the beginning of 2020. Sixteen reimbursements were granted. This program is funded by the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Organic Cost-Share Program

MDAC offers the Organic Cost-Share Program to Mississippi farmers obtaining Organic Certification. The program provided one organic farmer \$750 to offset the cost of the certification. This program is funded through the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.

Growing Lunch School Garden Grant

MDAC continued the Growing Lunch School Garden Grant through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Program for schools interested in building a school garden. Seventeen schools were awarded grants during fiscal year 2020, with a total of 20 currently participating. MDAC has awarded 78 grants since 2014.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Received \$425,843.26 in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds from USDA to promote the specialty crop industry of the state.
- Since its inception in 2006, MDAC has received \$4,218,759.34 from USDA in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds.
- Granted 17 schools a Growing Lunch School Garden Grant.
- Provided 74 Certificates of Free Sales to 11 companies exporting Mississippi agricultural products.
- Launched the Mississippi Farm Marketplace portal.



Commissioner Andy Gipson hosts the “Tourists Flock to the Farm” episode of the Genuine MS® Podcast with Genuine MS® members Jo Lynn Mitchell of Mitchell Family Farms in Collins, Michael May and Mikayla May of Lazy Acres in Chunky, and Neal Williams of Williams Family Farm in Wiggins. In this episode, the Mississippi agritourism industry was discussed.

DIRECTOR
PAIGE MANNING
Paige@mdac.ms.gov

MISSISSIPPI FARMERS MARKET

The Mississippi Farmers Market provides a location for Mississippi farmers to sell their locally-grown and produced agricultural products direct to the public.

The Mississippi Farmers Market was created by the Mississippi Legislature to provide a facility for the efficient handling of farm products in the interest of the farmer, consumer, general public, and the State of Mississippi. The 18,000-square foot facility serves as a central location for farmers, specialty food makers, and local artisans to sell their agricultural goods and wares. The Market provides farmers with additional marketing opportunities, while increasing consumers' access to fruits, vegetables, and other farm-raised products. The Market remained open during the pandemic and put safety measures in place, such as repositioning vendors to face outward for an open-air, safer shopping experience for customers.

The Mississippi Farmers Market participates in two USDA Farmers Market Nutrition Programs: the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. These programs provide vouchers to eligible WIC participants and senior citizens to shop at the Market.

The Market also rents the facility for private events, and a restaurant that utilizes products from Market vendors is located inside the Market. It serves breakfast and lunch five days per week.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- Provided a venue for 80 vendors with an average of 36 vendors attending per week.



MISSISSIPPI FARMERS MARKET
929 HIGH STREET, JACKSON, MS 39202
601-354-6573 | FarmersMarket@mdac.ms.gov

COUNTY CORRESPONDENTS PROGRAM



MDAC County Correspondents Program

In April of 2019, Commissioner Gipson established the County Correspondents Program. This program was created to receive timely information on current issues and to be responsive to the issues of our local farmers in each county in Mississippi. The program designates farmers from every Mississippi county to serve as County Correspondents. Each correspondent communicates with MDAC on issues affecting their jurisdiction. The program has been successful in fiscal year 2020.

The program is divided into five divisions. Each division has one supervisor that provides status updates to the central office in Jackson.

DIRECTOR

CLAUDE NASH

Claude@mdac.ms.gov

TIMBER COMMERCE

The Timber Commerce Division actively engages with State agencies and the private sector to promote the timber industry.

The Timber Commerce Division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce promotes timber products domestically and internationally. In conjunction with Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA), MDAC hosted buyers for Southern Yellow Pine Logs. Five local producers participated in this trade mission with buyers from China, Vietnam, and India. Orders were placed and great relationships were formed.

In conjunction with Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA), MDAC hosted an inbound Trade Mission for Southern Yellow Pine logs in December 2019. Buyers from Vietnam, India, and China visited Mississippi Southern Yellow Pine log facilities and operations to learn more about the timber industry. In addition, MDAC hosted one-on-one meetings with these buyers and five Southern Yellow pine log producers. Orders were placed and relationships were formed as a result. During the COVID-19 shutdown, the Timber Commerce Division continued to market timber resources and participated in numerous virtual trade sessions. Many webinars were made available to those in the timber industry. Spearheaded a successful Trade Mission along with MDA and Governor Bryant's office to Taiwan, resulting in Mississippi being chosen for the first time to participate in the Taiwan Goodwill Agriculture Trade Mission. Taiwan signed two Letters of Intent for purchasing soybeans and corn with a value exceeding \$2 billion dollars over the next two years. Three other states were also chosen to participate. MDAC expects more wood-related business opportunities from this collaboration.

MDAC published a timber booklet providing an overview of the state's timber assets. The booklet provides economic impact data for the state and for each Congressional District. The MDAC website was updated to include a dedicated section on Timber Commerce.

Transportation is essential to the economic health of our state. The Timber Commerce Division has been working with stakeholders in the public and private sectors for solutions targeting freight transport.



Buyers from China, India, and Vietnam toured Southern Yellow Pine log operations as part of the SUSTA Inbound Trade Mission.

TIMBER COMMERCE CONTINUED

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Hosted Southern Yellow Pine Log Inbound Trade Mission with India, China, and Vietnam.
- Published Timber Brochure with Economic Impact Data.
- The Timber Commerce Division has worked with the following countries and regions either directly or in collaboration with Mississippi companies seeking opportunities for our Mississippi Timber: Taiwan, India, China, Vietnam, Caribbean, Mexico, the Middle East, and Europe.

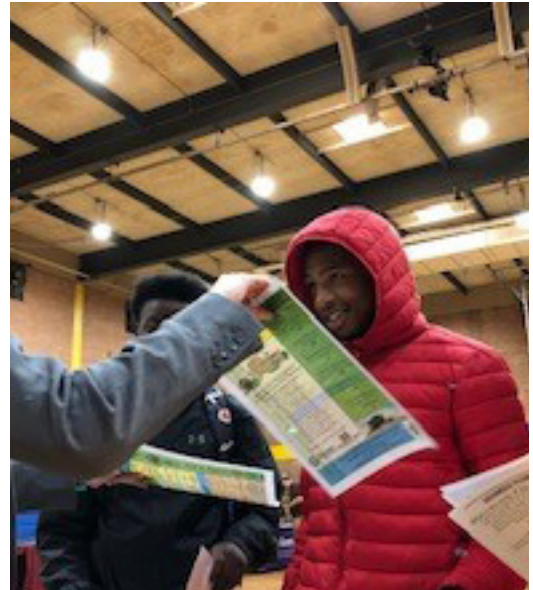
DIRECTOR

GINGER WILLIAMSON

Ginger@mdac.ms.gov

AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Agriculture Workforce Development is dedicated to growing Mississippi agriculture through workforce education, outreach, and development. The program strives to meet employment demands of Mississippi's agriculture workforce and to create a pipeline of quality educational and training opportunities for high school and college students pursuing a career in agriculture in the state. This program partners with Mississippi agricultural businesses, industries, educational institutions, and agricultural youth development organizations to promote awareness and increase the number of qualified applicants for agricultural jobs.



ACCOMPLISHMENT

Through its Agriculture Workforce Development Initiative, MDAC conducted a needs assessment survey. Data collected from the survey determined the needs of the agriculture workforce in Mississippi and will be utilized to create mechanisms to provide more opportunities for students and job seekers to connect them with potential employers in the agriculture industry.



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FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce coordinates two USDA-funded supplemental nutrition programs that benefit fruit and vegetable growers and eligible Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program participants and low-income senior citizens in select communities of Mississippi. The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program provide checks for nutritionally at-risk Mississippi residents to redeem at authorized farmers markets in the state.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Statewide, there were 15 farmers markets and one farm stand that participated in the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program and 27 farmers markets that participated in the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.
- An estimated 150 farmers were authorized to participate in the programs.
- An estimated 10,000 low-income Mississippi residents received FMNP (WIC and Senior) checks to redeem at participating farmers markets.
- Participants in both programs redeemed over \$116,000 in FMNP benefits with participating fruit and vegetable growers in Mississippi.



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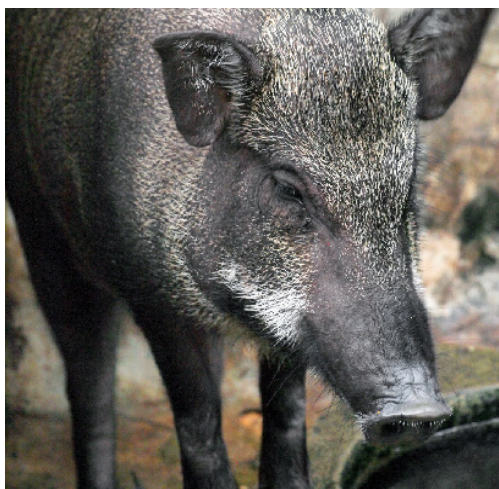
WILD HOG CONTROL PROGRAM

To aid in the management of nuisance wildlife on agricultural and forestry lands, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce created the Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP) under the authority of House Bill 1566 Section 1, 2020 Legislative Session. As part of the WHCP, MDAC is proud to offer wild hog traps to land managers for the control of wild hogs on private agricultural and forestry lands in Mississippi.

Control takes place by strategically deploying traps in concentrated focal areas across the state. Focal areas are determined by MDAC through an application process. Submitted applications are ranked based on the number of acres available for trapping, historical agricultural losses caused by wild hogs on the property, and current trapping activity.

A cooperative application is encouraged for small acreage (i.e., adjoining land managers of small parcels should work together to submit one application). Traps are available for one-month intervals, dependent upon use and success. Depending on landscape and land use, the placement of one trap per 1,000 acres is recommended.

The Wild Hog Control Program was enacted after the Commissioner's Wild Hog Challenge, an initiative to protect property from wild hogs while raising awareness of wild hogs' negative impact on agriculture.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The enactment of the Commissioner's Wild Hog Challenge has led to the entrapment or harvest of 920 wild hogs across 36 counties in Mississippi.
- As a result of the Commissioner's Wild Hog Challenge, 96,744 acres of crops were protected .
- The Wild Hog Control Program and the Commissioner's Wild Hog Challenge have raised awareness of non-native, nuisance animals that cause more than \$60 million in property damage in Mississippi each year, with substantial damage caused to row crops, pastures and forestlands.

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HEMP CULTIVATION TASK FORCE

During the 2019 legislative session, the Mississippi Legislature established the Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force (House Bill 1547) to consider the potential of hemp cultivation and its effects on the Mississippi economy. The legislation specified Commissioner Andy Gipson to serve as Chairman of the 13-member Task Force. The Task Force issued its final report on December 3, 2019. In the report, the Task Force reported both the positive potential and the significant risks of hemp cultivation in the State of Mississippi.

In 2020, Senate Bill 2725, also known as the Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Act, was signed into law on June 29, 2020. This act legalized the cultivation of hemp under a state plan to be created and implemented by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce. Although the act allowed for a state hemp cultivation program, the necessary funding to implement the program was not appropriated by the Mississippi Legislature. Producers can obtain a hemp license from the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the USDA Domestic Hemp Production Program.

The only legal option for a producer to cultivate hemp in Mississippi now is to obtain a hemp license from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the USDA Domestic Hemp Production Program.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

- The Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Task Force submitted a report outlining the positive potential and the significant risks of hemp cultivation in the State of Mississippi to the Mississippi Legislature (as required by House Bill 1547, 2019 Regular Session).

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AGRICULTURE & LIVESTOCK THEFT BUREAU

The Mississippi Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau assists in the investigation of all farm and agriculture-related crimes.

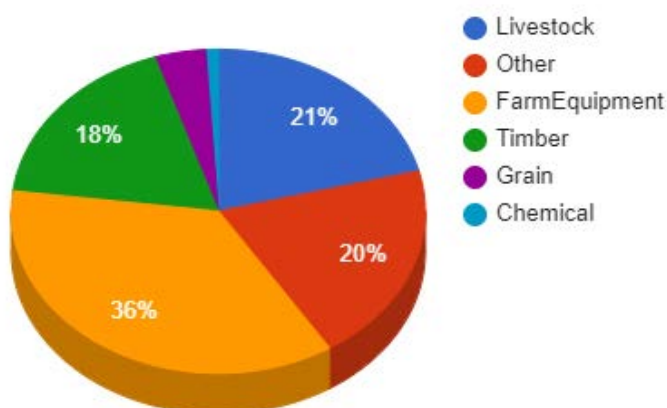
The Mississippi Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau (MALTB) enforces all state laws pertaining to the theft of cattle, horses, swine, poultry, fish, farm equipment, chemicals, timber, and other farm or agriculture-related crimes. The Bureau consists of nine investigators, one for each Mississippi Highway Patrol District. The Bureau is also responsible for the investigation and prosecution of all persons who violate any of the laws administered by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

In addition to its law enforcement function, MALTB maintains registration of all livestock brands. Branding is not required for livestock in Mississippi. However, if livestock are branded, the brand must be registered. The brands are recorded for a five-year period at a cost of five dollars. Registered brands are published in book form and distributed to law enforcement members throughout the state.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Bureau investigated 177 cases with a reported value of over \$1,254,451, clearing 79 cases.
- Recovered property was valued at \$635,582.
- The Bureau issued approximately 1,425 brands, which generated approximately \$7,125.00 for a five year period.
- The total recovery rate during the fiscal year was 51%.

Percentage Distribution of Dollar Value of Reported Crimes



Percentage Breakdown

- Livestock: 21%
- Other: 20%
- Farm Equipment: 36%
- Timber: 18%
- Grain: 4%
- Chemical: 1%

AGRICULTURE & LIVESTOCK THEFT BUREAU CONTINUED



Pictured are more items recovered by the MALTB.

The Kubota tractor with front end loader and bush hog (top left corner, valued at \$28,500) was stolen out of Alabama and recovered in Winston County. The 2021 Honda Pioneer (top right corner, valued at \$22,000) was recovered in Copiah County. The Kubota tractor with disk (middle left, valued at \$30,000) was recovered in Clark County. One hundred head of cattle (valued at \$100,000) was recovered in Scott County. The utility trailer (bottom left, valued at \$3,000) was recovered in Winston County. The stock trailer (bottom right corner, valued at \$8,000) was recovered in Lauderdale County.

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MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY MUSEUM CULTIVATING MISSISSIPPI

The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum tells the story of Mississippi's agricultural history through indoor and outdoor exhibits and events.

The mission of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum is to create an environment that communicates the value of past and present Mississippi agricultural lifestyles, relationships,

and practices and their relevance to the future of all people. The Museum consists of multiple exhibits including Small Town Mississippi, a train exhibit featuring several gauges of trains, and a nature trail. The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum is home to the Bisland Cotton Gin, America's oldest working cotton gin, and the National Agriculture Aviation Museum.

MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY MUSEUM



ANNUAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, in cooperation with the LeFleur Museum District, hosted the third annual Mississippi Science Fest with over 6,700 students and adults attending the two day festival. Presenters included groups from MS State University Engineering Departments, 4-H, MSU Extension, agriculture associations and STEM-based private businesses.
- Over 6,400 children and adults attended the October Pumpkin Adventure, which included a hay ride tour of gardens and Small Town, Mississippi, a walk around the Museum, and a pumpkin to take home.
- Harvest Festival was visited by nearly 5,700 people. This educational event consisted of demonstrations at the saw mill, cane mill, print shop, blacksmith shop, and gristmill. The Bisland Cotton Gin, America's oldest working cotton gin, ginned multiple bales of cotton for visitors. The event also featured hit-and-miss engines, bluegrass music, antique tractors, and live interpreters demonstrating butter churning at the Fortenberry-Parkman Farmstead.
- The Museum hosted more than 700 guests for its Homestead for the Holidays event. This complementary event was sponsored by the Mississippi Egg Marketing Board and the Mississippi Beef Council. Guests were treated to wagon rides, Small Town in Lights, a skit, live music, and breakfast for dinner.
- Spring Farm Days offered the opportunity for more than 1,401 visitors to see tractor demonstrations, blacksmith demonstrations, and tour the Fortenberry-Parkman Farmstead over a 3-day period.
- Because of the pandemic, the Museum was closed for three months, and the Celtic Fest, the Mississippi Egg Marketing Board's Annual Easter Egg Hunt, AgVentures (held in partnership with Mississippi State University Extension Service, Mississippi Farm Bureau, Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, Mississippi Cattlewomen's Association, Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks, Mississippi Soil and Water Commission, and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service), and the Mississippi Pickle Fest were cancelled.

MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY MUSEUM CONTINUED



NEW PROGRAMMING

- The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum was selected as the recipient of USDA's NRCS grant to construct two high tunnels. The Museum is using this opportunity to create a new educational space for horticulture through the planting, tending, and harvesting of fruits, vegetables, and flowers. Students of all ages will participate in this new outdoor classroom.



NEW PROJECTS

- Completed the Museum's maintenance shop, exhibition barn, Children's Barnyard and multi-purpose building. These buildings are all replacements from the November 2014 fire.
- Completed phase 1 (of 2) of the redesign of the National Agriculture Aviation Museum exhibit with funding from the MS Agriculture and Forestry Museum Foundation. Phase 2 (of 2) renovation work will begin after funding has been secured.
- Completed the roof replacement of the Education Center.
- Replaced the fire suppression system in the Sparkman Auditorium.
- The Museum completed the installation of a new fire suppression and security system for the Heritage Center.
- Completed the installation of a new concrete sidewalk from the Sparkman parking lot to the Heritage Center. New asphalt sidewalks were added to the Fitzgerald Building and the Cabin Office Building.
- Constructing new ADA ramps on all the rental buildings.
- Planning a revenue-generating project that includes building an attached, enclosed structure to house a walk-in cooler/freezer and a covered structure to house a new meat smoker. Allowing the Museum to offer daily smoked meats and holiday treats, including casseroles, and a new line of jarred goods through the General Store.



GRANT PROJECT

- The Museum received a \$94,490 grant from USDA-NRCS grant for the construction of two high-tunnels, which includes 24 months of funding for a project administrator and intern.

MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY MUSEUM CONTINUED

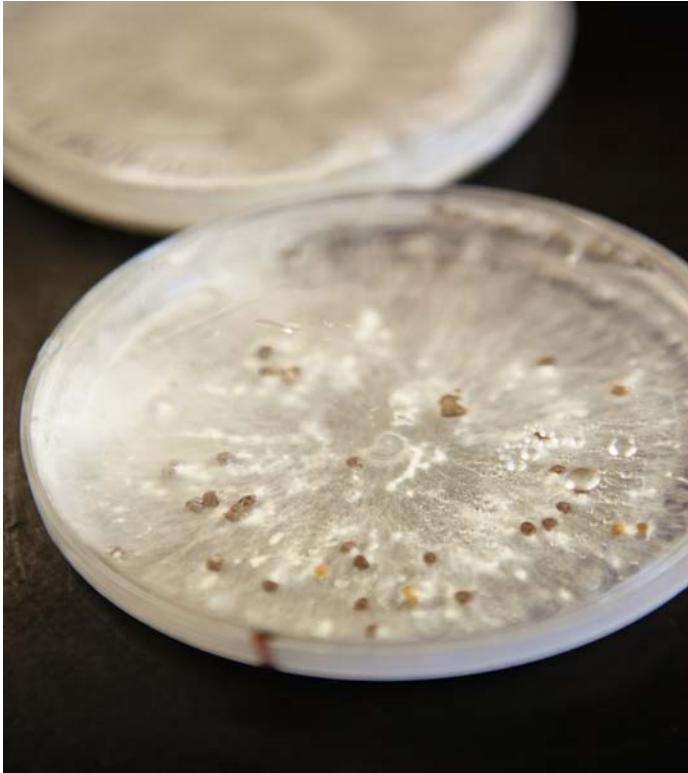


Ribbon cutting event held for the opening of the newly built Children's Barnyard and Multipurpose Building.



The Barnyard was completed in March 2020.

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BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL INTERESTS

The Bureau of Plant Industry protects the agricultural and horticultural interests of the state from harmful insects, diseases, and weeds.

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) is a regulatory and service division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. BPI serves as the Plant Protection and Quarantine Division of the agency. BPI administers 31 programs pertaining to agricultural aviation, pesticides, plant pests, honey bees, seed,

animal feed, fertilizer, lime, and soil/plant amendments. Additionally, the Bureau maintains cooperative agreements with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in administration and enforcement of state and federal laws. BPI is also designated by the federal government as the state agency responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).



PLANT PEST PROGRAM

Under the provisions of the Mississippi Plant Act, the Bureau carries out plant pest programs designed to prevent the spread of destructive insects, diseases, and other pests when plant material, machinery, and carriers are transported. These programs include inspection, certification, quarantine, and survey activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Certified 956 nurseries and nursery dealers.
- Conducted 1,210 nursery and nursery dealer inspections.
- Issued 503 phytosanitary certificates for plant material and seed export.
- Conducted 1,510 visual surveys statewide at nurseries and nursery dealers for Pink Hibiscus Mealybug, Chrysanthemum White Rust, Viburnum Leaf Beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, Giant African Snail, Cactus Moth, and Asian Longhorned Beetle. Survey results at all sites were negative.
- Conducted 90 visual surveys at 30 soybean production fields in 21 counties for Maritime Garden Snail, Bud Borer, Cucurbit Beetle, Pink Hibiscus Mealybug, Yellow Witchweed, and Benghal Dayflower. Survey results at all sites were negative.
- Conducted 89 visual surveys at nine different production corn fields for Cucurbit Beetle, Late Wilt or Corn, Black Maize Beetle, Java Downy Mildew, Philippine Downy Mildew, and Brown Stripe Downy Mildew.
- Conducted 102 visual surveys at 86 cotton production fields in 11 counties for Giant African Snail, Cotton Seed Bug, Pink Hibiscus Mealybug, and Benghal Dayflower. Survey results at all sites were negative.
- Conducted 44 visual surveys at 22 rice production fields in five counties for Giant African Snail, Apple Snails, South American Leaf Miner, Bakanae, Senegal Tea Plant, Bacterial Leaf Streak of Rice, and Bacterial Blight of Rice. Survey results at all sites were negative.
- Conducted 1,210 visual surveys statewide in nurseries, nursery dealers, and the environment for the noxious weed Cogongrass. Survey results at all sites were negative.
- Traps were set in 12 locations for Exotic Bark Beetle. These sites were located within Lowndes, Oktibbeha, and Clay Counties. In total, 458 samples were collected and screened for exotic species. All samples screened were negative for all reportable exotic species.
- Placed six traps at lumber mills and furniture manufacturers in six counties for the Sirex Woodwasp. Results from all traps were negative.

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY CONTINUED

- Placed 15 traps at high risk sites in five counties for Mediterranean Pine Engraver, Six-toothed Bark Beetle, European Spruce Bark Beetle, Pine Shoot Beetle, Red Haired Pine Bark Beetle, Japanese Pine Sawyer, Large Pine Beetle, and Black Fir Sawyer. Results from all traps were negative.
- Serviced 55 sweet potato growers.
- Monitored 2,700 traps on 28,100 acres of sweet potatoes with no positive sweet potato weevil detection.
- Continued to directly serve landowners in an effort to control Cogongrass.
- Conducted a Cogongrass demonstration program for 218 private land owners treating 873 acres.
- Collected assessment fees on 476,364 acres of cotton by farmers participating in statewide eradication of the boll weevil.
- Certified and inspected 41,913 colonies of honey bees.
- Permitted 97,554 bee colonies into Mississippi.
- Issued 503 federal and state phytosanitary certificates on plant materials such as nursery stock, seed, and lumber. Phytosanitary certificates facilitate trade with states and foreign countries requiring documentation certifying plant materials are free of disease and pests.
- BPI continues to assist eligible non-industrial private landowners in combating Cogongrass through temporary grants from the USDA Forest Service. The primary objective of the Cogongrass Treatment Program is to reduce the spread of this noxious weed to new areas by helping private landowners control or eradicate existing infestations. Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica* L.) is a non-native, invasive grass that is a state and federal noxious weed. Cogongrass has been recognized as one of the “Top 10 Worst Weeds in the World.” Cogongrass infestations negatively affect tree regeneration, growth, and survival, as well as wildlife habitat, native plant diversity, forage quality and property values.
- Sweet potato seedstock, equipment, and any other items from sweet potato fields in Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina were quarantined and only allowed to enter Mississippi with a prior inspection by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture with notice of shipment. This was to protect Mississippi cropland from the spread of the Guava Root Knot Nematode.
- BPI continued its program designed to assist private landowners in preventing and controlling the ornamental tallow tree through the use of herbicides. Landowners can apply for herbicide assistance or request preventative measures to control or eradicate existing infestations.

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY CONTINUED



PESTICIDE PROGRAM

Under the provisions of the Mississippi Pesticide Law, the Bureau of Plant Industry carries out various activities to register and inspect pesticide products, administers special types of pesticide registrations and exemptions, license dealers of restricted-use pesticides, and conducts activities protecting the general public and the environment from possible pesticide contamination and misuse.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Registered 14,903 pesticide products.
- Collected 413 samples from products available at retail and distribution outlets to check compliance with state and federal pesticide laws.
- Issued 126 stop-sale orders on pesticide products found to be deficient, misbranded, and non-registered.
- Issued one special-use registrations (Section 24c of FIFRA) on pesticide products.
- Issued four emergency exemptions (Section 18 of FIFRA) on pesticide products.
- Licensed 303 dealers to sell restricted use pesticide products.
- Issued 896 licenses/permits and 1,516 registered technician identification cards to persons engaged in professional services such as pest control and weed control services.
- Licensed 206 agricultural aviation pilots and 88 applicators, and registered 158 aircrafts for agricultural purposes.
- Issued 164 pest management consultants licenses.
- Issued two soil classifier licenses.
- Issued 1,582 private applicator certificates.
- Issued 417 commercial applicator certificates.
- Conducted 18 producer-establishment inspections, 646 marketplace inspections, 568 inspections of applicator records, 210 inspections of dealer records, 21 container containment inspections.
- Conducted 41 nonagricultural/for cause inspections of pesticide misuse and 61 agricultural/for cause inspections of pesticide misuse.
- Conducted 1,536 nonagricultural inspections of pesticide use and 49 agricultural inspections of pesticide use.
- Collected 51 samples under the Pesticide Enforcement Program.
- Conducted 32 worker protection inspections.
- Collected 63,256 pounds of waste pesticide products for disposal.
- Issued 74 Horticulturalists licenses.
- Issued 20 Tree Surgeons licenses.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MDAC and Mississippi State University Extension developed an online Private Applicator Certification program. It was developed to provide more efficient access to training and certification as an alternative to in-person training, which was suspended due to COVID-19.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued a ruling that vacated Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registrations for three dicamba herbicides used by farmers across the nation. The products impacted are Xtendimax, FeXapan and Engenia. MDAC will enforce label requirements and regulations for these products under new guidance released from the EPA. Growers and commercial applicators may use existing supplies in their possession on or before June 3, 2020, until July 31, 2020.

MDAC, Mississippi State University Extension, and Mississippi Pest Control Association designed a Termite training center to conduct training and recertification for termite technicians, pest control company owners and managers and other members of Mississippi's structural pest control industry.



SEED PROGRAM AND STATE SEED LABORATORY

The Seed Testing Laboratory provides regulatory and service seed testing to the seed industry and farmers of Mississippi. The seed lab inspects and collects samples of seed offered for sale to determine truth-in-labeling. Seed companies and farmers may submit samples of seed for testing to obtain quality and purity levels of seed. Regulatory and service tests protect and support seed companies and farmers by providing unbiased and reliable information in a timely manner. The Seed Testing Laboratory also tests all seed for the Mississippi Certified Seed Program.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Issued 1,982 permits for the sale of seed to be planted.
- Received 16,525 seed samples and performed a total of 31,492 tests on seed.
- Collected 3,808 official regulatory seed samples and found 73 official regulatory seed samples to be in violation of the State Seed Law.
- Conducted 8,021 special tests on seed such as cool germ test, accelerated aging, and chemical tests.
- MDAC and Mississippi State University Extension collected unsolicited packages of seeds from residents in Mississippi. MDAC randomly inspected the collected seed from China and other foreign countries to ensure protection against invasive pests, disease, and noxious weeds.



FEED, FERTILIZER, LIME, AND SOIL AMENDMENTS PROGRAM

Under provisions of Mississippi laws regulating feed, fertilizer, lime, and soil amendment products, the Bureau of Plant Industry carries out activities that include registering products and facilities, collecting registration and inspection fees, inspecting and sampling products for label guarantees, and assessing penalties for substandard products.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Registered 17,692 feed products from 1,052 feed distributors.
- Collected 2,141 feed samples.
- Registered 13,517 fertilizer products from 460 fertilizer distributors.
- Collected 778 fertilizer samples.
- Registered 169 lime products from 83 distributors.
- Collected 118 lime samples.



PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

The BPI public information program provided updates and training material for the following groups and/or events: Fall Flower and Garden Fest in Crystal Springs; Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association Convention in Biloxi; Pesticide Re-certification Trainings at the Panola County Extension Office, Coastal Research and Extension Center, Forrest County Extension Office, Central MS Research and Extension Center, Delta Research and Extension Center, and North MS Research and Extension Center.

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**CONSUMER PROTECTION * MEAT INSPECTION * WEIGHTS & MEASURES
PETROLEUM INSPECTION * FEDERAL & STATE INSPECTION**

REGULATORY SERVICES PROTECTING MISSISSIPPI

The Bureau of Regulatory Services is a regulatory bureau within the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Its mission is to effectively and efficiently administer and enforce the laws and regulations charged to the Bureau. The foremost goals of the Bureau are to protect the health and economic welfare of all citizens, to afford a measure of economic protection which citizens cannot provide for themselves, and to strive for equity in the marketplace which, when realized, works to the good of all citizens of this state.

The Bureau is divided into area-specific divisions that regulate certain businesses within the state. The Bureau administers state laws and promulgates regulations to support those laws in the areas of Meat Inspection, Retail Food Sanitation, Labelling laws, Grains, Aquaculture, Peanuts, Petroleum, and Weights and Measures. The Bureau partners with multiple federal and state agencies to carry out its mission.

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CONSUMER PROTECTION



FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY

The Consumer Protection Division protects the interests of the general public by ensuring food quality and safety and fairness in addition to equity in the retail marketplace.

The Consumer Protection Division continues to be one of the most diversified divisions within the Department. The Division's goal is to protect Mississippi consumers on a daily basis by enforcing retail food safety and sanitation laws and regulations, weights and measures standards, and food labeling requirements in retail food establishments such as convenience stores and grocery stores. The Division conducts routine inspections of all retail food establishments throughout the state to ensure that food safety and sanitation regulations are being met. The Division's inspectors routinely examine meat market sanitation, ensure food is stored at appropriate temperatures, confirm the availability of hot water and soap in restrooms, and monitor stores to ensure the absence of insects and rodents.

The Consumer Protection Division Inspectors examine scales in all retail food establishments to confirm that weights and measures standards for purchased items are being met. They also ensure consumers receive the quantity and quality of the goods they pay for by testing scales and UPC pricing for accuracy to make sure the consumer is not being overcharged or undersold when purchasing a product.

Consumer Protection weights and measures inspections include the following:

- Ensuring the accuracy of scales, including meat scales, deli scales, produce scales, and checkout scales.
- UPC price verification sample testing, which ensures that prices on shelves match prices at checkout registers.
- Net weight package checking inspections, which ensure not only that consumers are paying for only the net weight of foods, but also that the correct weight is properly applied to the price of the product.

The Consumer Protection Division also enforces proper food labeling requirements through cooperative agreements and collaboration with government entities.

CONSUMER PROTECTION CONTINUED

The Consumer Protection Division works with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service to perform inspections of retail food establishments to ensure that illegally processed meats are not sold in retail food establishments.

The Consumer Protection Division conducts Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) inspections through a cooperative agreement with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. Foods such as muscle cuts of meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, and unprocessed nuts must have country-of-origin declarations at the final point of sale.

The Consumer Protection Division's food labeling responsibilities also include inspection of the sale of pure honey and pure syrup. The Division works in collaboration with the Mississippi State Department of Health and the Mississippi State Chemical Lab to regulate the sale of honey and syrup. Pure honey and pure syrup label inspections are performed to ensure consumers are receiving the product as it is advertised on the labels.

These cooperative efforts are performed routinely so that consumers are educated and aware of the quality and origin of the foods they purchase.

CATFISH, SHRIMP, AND CRAWFISH

It is essential to ensure catfish, shrimp, and crawfish being promoted as U.S. products are not being discreetly replaced with foreign substitutes. The Consumer Protection Division makes inspections in restaurants throughout the state, making sure to prohibit retailers from selling similar foods disguised or labeled incorrectly as U.S. products.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The Consumer Protection Division has maintained a natural disaster partnership with the FDA and other state agencies in the event of natural disasters, such as hurricanes and tornadoes. In an effort to help emergency responders, the Division has mapped the GPS coordinates of all of its inspected stores.

CONSUMER PROTECTION CONTINUED



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Issued 1,608 retail food establishment licenses.
- Conducted 4,155 retail food sanitation inspections.
- Checked 27,847 items for net weight.
- Inspected 58,986 dozen of shell eggs.
- Conducted 2,805 meat compliance inspections; 3,036 disposition of garbage inspections; and 824 UPC price verification inspections.
- Conducted 387 Catfish/Shrimp/Crawfish Marketing inspections.
- Conducted 49 USDA COOL audits.

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FEDERAL & STATE INSPECTION PROGRAM



FOOD SAFETY

The Federal/State Inspection Program Division provides quality inspections for produce growers as well as unbiased food safety audits.

This Division conducts fruit and vegetable inspections as well as third party food safety audits known as Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) audits. All inspections and food safety audits are provided statewide to farms, packers, and wholesalers.

The GAP/GHP audits are voluntary independent audits of produce suppliers throughout the production and supply chain. GAP/GHP audits focus on best agricultural practices to verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. The audits verify adherence to the recommendations made in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* and industry recognized food safety practices.

Farmer Stock Peanuts must be inspected and a grade issued per lot in order for the farmer to receive payment at the point of sale. The Federal/State Inspection Program Division grades the peanuts brought to buying points in the state.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted 81 GAP/GHP food safety audits.
- Graded 24,865 tons of peanuts at four buying points in the state.

PRODUCE SAFETY DIVISION

The Produce Safety Division provides food safety assurance for consumers of fresh fruit and vegetables which are grown in the State of Mississippi.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's Produce Safety Division was established in order to implement the Produce Safety Rule in Mississippi. The Produce Safety Division not only regulates the Produce Safety Rule in Mississippi but also provides Outreach and On Farm Readiness Reviews to farmers prior to an operation having an inspection. The Outreach group works to increase awareness of the Produce Safety Rule as well as help growers prepare their operations for compliance. All outreach services, with the exception of our required training, are free to growers in Mississippi.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Identified 278 farms which grow and sell covered produce under the rule.
- Identified six large farms which received inspections this year.
- Provided two On Farm Readiness Reviews to identified large farms.
- Performed 150 educational farm visits to growers.
- Provided growers with eight Produce Safety Alliance Grower trainings in conjunction with Mississippi State University Extension Service and Alcorn State University training 122 growers.
- Developed Produce Safety Division website for grower education.
- Mailed over 150 Produce Safety Educational packets to possible growers.
- Promoted the Produce Safety Rule at over 10 meetings and workshops statewide.

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PETROLEUM PRODUCTS INSPECTION



ENSURING COMPLIANCE

The Petroleum Products Inspection Division regulates the motor fuel sold in Mississippi to ensure that those who purchase petroleum products and motor fuels get what they pay for in terms of quality and quantity.

All petroleum products sold in the state must be registered with MDAC's Petroleum Products Inspection Division. All retail motor fuel products which include gasoline, ethanol blended fuel, diesel fuel, biodiesel blended fuel, and kerosene, are analyzed by the Mississippi State Chemical Lab to ensure product compliance within American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) specifications. Analysis includes tests for octane number, alcohol content, diesel flash point, biodiesel content, and the presence of water in fuel.

The Division regulates approximately 2.3 billion gallons of fuel consumed by Mississippians and visitors to the state and conducts annual inspections of the Retail Motor-Fuel Dispensers (RMFD), commonly known as gas pumps, to ensure compliance with all laws and regulations. These inspections consist of ensuring the accuracy of RMFDs, testing for the presence of water, checking signage to ensure that the proper price is displayed on all signs, and checking the quality of the fuel to ensure proper product designations. Violations are issued for equipment found to be out of compliance with the petroleum law. Petroleum equipment repairmen are required to obtain a license from MDAC and report all adjusted devices to the Division.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued efforts of maintaining efficiency by eliminating printed inspection reports by 99 percent. Reports are sent electronically to respective responsible parties with a valid email address.
- Registered 217 fuel distributors and licensed 524 petroleum equipment repairmen.
- Conducted annual inspections of 55,827 registered devices at 2,672 retail establishments and obtained 1,440 fuel samples.
- Inspected a total of 48,593 individual devices.
- Responded to 206 consumer complaints within 24 hours, which resulted in corrective action being taken in over 26% of the complaints for non-compliance.
- Enforced stop sales for 126 fuel violations, 123 calibration violations, 264 sign violations, and 127 water violations.
- Established contactless COVID-19 inspection protocol.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS CONTINUED



The Petroleum Products Inspection Division regulates approximately 2.3 billion gallons of fuel consumed by Mississippians and visitors to our state.

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MEAT INSPECTION



FOOD SAFETY

The Meat Inspection Division provides food safety assurance to consumers of meat and poultry food products.

The Meat Inspection Division provides inspection services to establishments that prepare meat and poultry food products for entry into intrastate commerce and to some establishments that engage in interstate commerce. The Division inspects all establishments engaged in the slaughtering of food animals and poultry, except for those plants operating under federal inspection. The Division also inspects the further processing of meat, meat-food products, poultry, and poultry food products and their preparation for consumer items. These products are also inspected throughout formulation, packaging, labeling, and distribution to retail outlets. This assurance is becoming more critical as more food products are intended to be consumed with little or no further preparation at home.

MDAC has a cooperative agreement with the USDA establishing a meat and poultry inspection system that is equal to the federal inspection system. In addition, MDAC has cooperative agreements for the Talmadge-Aiken Program (TA), which permits state employees to provide inspections at federal meat plants, as well as the Compliance and Investigation Division Program (CID), which gives authority to inspect businesses that handle meat and poultry for law compliance.

A new processing-only establishment was added to MDAC's inspected facilities this past year.

MEAT INSPECTION CONTINUED



The Meat Inspection Division provides food safety assurance to consumers in Mississippi. In 2020, the Division inspected 28.39 million pounds of red meat and 37.62 million pounds of poultry.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Inspected 28.39 million pounds of red meat and 37.62 million pounds of poultry.
- Inspected 13,053 rabbits and 6,046 quail.
- Issued licenses to 28 state meat plants.
- Inspected 23 plants through the Talmadge-Aiken program.

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WEIGHTS & MEASURES



ENSURING ACCURACY

The Weights and Measures Division regulates the use of weighing and measuring devices used in commerce to ensure consumers are treated fairly in the marketplace.

The Weights and Measures Division inspects and tests scales and measurement equipment used in commerce to ensure compliance with state laws and equity in the marketplace.

Division inspectors make routine inspections on all types of commercial weighing devices; including railroad scales, vehicle scales, livestock scales, hopper scales, floor scales, bench scales, and those used to weigh precious metals and stones like gold, silver, and diamonds. Inspectors conduct package inspections to verify the net contents of packaged commodities and price verification inspections in businesses that utilize UPC scanning systems. The Division also investigates complaints involving weighing and measuring devices.

The Division also licenses livestock facilities, livestock auctioneers, pulpwood facilities, bonded weighmasters, scale service companies, and repairmen that install and repair weighing or measuring devices within the State of Mississippi.



MOISTURE METER TESTING LABORATORY

The Mississippi Moisture Meter Laboratory provides testing and inspection of devices used to measure the moisture content of agricultural products offered for sale, processed, or stored, using standard methods set by the USDA. The Moisture Meter Laboratory also compiles grain standards used in the inspection of grain moisture meters tested in the state. The laboratory is located on the campus of the Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES CONTINUED



The Weights and Measures Division makes routine inspections on all types of commercial weighing devices including railroad scales, vehicle scales, livestock scales, hopper scales, floor scales, bench scales, and those used to weigh precious metals and stones like gold, silver, and diamonds.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Tested 4,815 devices/scales.
- Inspected 1,030 heavy scales, 3,650 intermediate scales, 83 livestock scales, and 52 railway track scales.
- Calibrated 22 dairy farm milk tanks.
- Conducted 60 bonded weighmaster inspections, 30 pulpwood/timber inspections, 536 package inspections, and 94 UPC inspections.
- Conducted 125 oven tests (29 corn, 36 rice, 48 wheat, 12 soybeans).
- Conducted 173 grain moisture inspections.

DIRECTOR

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WEIGHTS & MEASURES CONTINUED



METROLOGY LABORATORY

The Mississippi Metrology Laboratory tests, calibrates, and certifies measuring devices used in commerce for accuracy.

The Regulatory Services Bureau maintains the Mississippi Metrology Laboratory located on the campus of Alcorn State University in Lorman. The lab is accredited for the testing of mass, volume, and length by the National Institute of Standard and Technology (NIST), which certifies weighing and measuring test equipment to validate the accuracy of these standards. The certification allows the Lab to provide certification and calibration services for government, commercial, and private entities. Once certified, the equipment can be used for testing and calibrating of mass and volume standards. This certification allows MDAC to test all measuring devices for accuracy used in commerce which is traceable to NIST.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Calibrated 4,665 devices.

DIRECTOR

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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



The Information Management Division provides information technology services to MDAC staff.

The Information Management Division (IMD) is primarily responsible for providing information technology and services to all employees of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Also, IMD provides technical and network support, application development and systems support, and strategic planning services for both the Mississippi Board of Animal Health and the Mississippi State Fair Commission.

IMD plays a critical role in aligning information technology with the agency's business goals, providing the infrastructure resources to support the agency's communication and decision making, and exploring emerging technologies to promote agriculture and commerce in the state.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Successfully resolved 1,856 tracked agency Help Desk tickets.
- Initiated the BPI Automation project.
- Consolidated server room equipment leading to a 90% virtual server environment.
- Disposed of over 300 antiquated inventoried items of IT equipment.
- Upgraded MDAC core network switch from Cisco to Aruba to give MDAC more flexibility and security with its internal network.
- Converted Catfish Processor reporting website database application from MS Access to SQL server in agency Intranet (AgNet).
- Modernized network security, including cloud-based email scanning, remote computer support, and software update management tools.
- Created off-site backup infrastructure at the State data center for disaster recovery.
- Created and launched the COVID-19 MDAC Response website, Passport to Fun website, Hemp Cultivation Task Force, the Mississippi Farm Marketplace web portal, the Wild Hog Challenge website with public entry of hogs and AgNet back end management of database, the Mississippi Forestry and Timber website, the Dixie National Flag Girl application website, the Genuine MS SoundCloud Podcast website, and the new Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum website with new design and new server infrastructure.
- Modernized the MDAC networking room with new patch boxes, cabling, and reconfiguration of racks.
- Improved MDAC Unmanned Aircraft Systems program by adding two drones with the ability to support the MACTB.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

- Provided multimedia services and aerial documentation by collecting footage of many events, activities, and locations, including the Yazoo backwater flooding, construction of the New Mississippi Trade Mart, Dixie National Livestock Show & Rodeo events, the Mississippi Farmers Market, the Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum's Children's Barn ribbon cutting, mapping of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds, mixed soybean variety aerial data collection, and the Mannsdale Upper Elementary School Growing Lunch School Garden tour.
- Implemented the produce safety On Farm Readiness Review (OFRR) farm check request application.
- Migrated all databases that were on SQL 2008 Server to SQL 2016, including WinWam, Fuelman, MBAH disease reporting, BPI enforcement, and Auxin databases.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, IMD provided support for telework, including purchasing hardware, issuing laptops, setting up virtual meetings, providing VPN access to office files, and providing remote support. In addition, IMD converted the on-premise IMD Helpdesk Ticket system to a cloud-based and decommissioned server, created AgNet COVID-19 employee survey to evaluate symptoms of employees before working in the office.

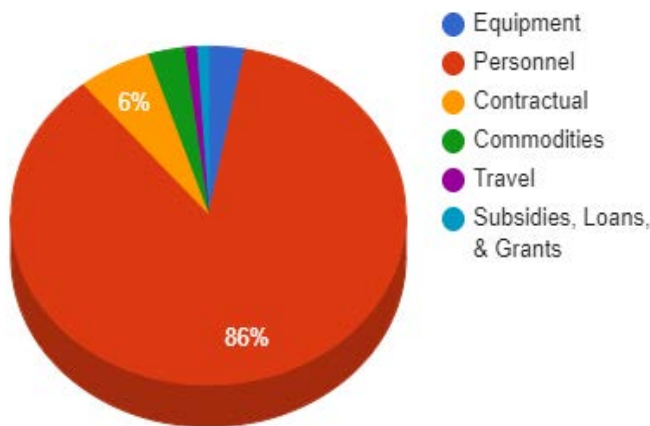
DIRECTOR

JASON PRICE

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REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

GENERAL FUNDS ONLY

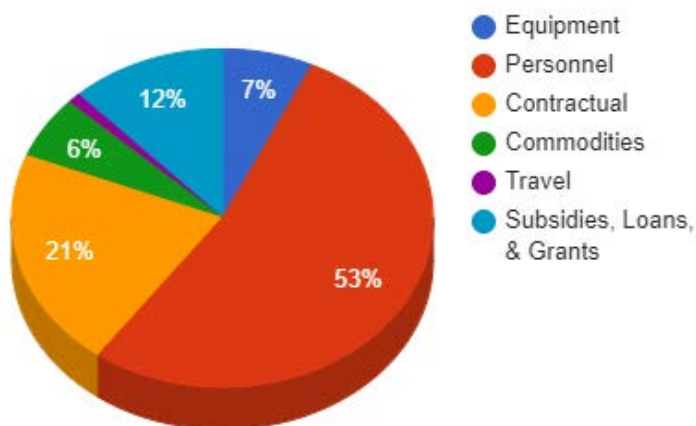


Total Revenues: \$7,461,254
Total Expenditures: \$7,452,635

Percentage Breakdown

- Equipment: 3%
- Personnel: 86%
- Contractual: 6%
- Commodities: 3%
- Travel: 1%
- Subsidies, Loans, & Grants: 1%

SPECIAL FUNDS ONLY

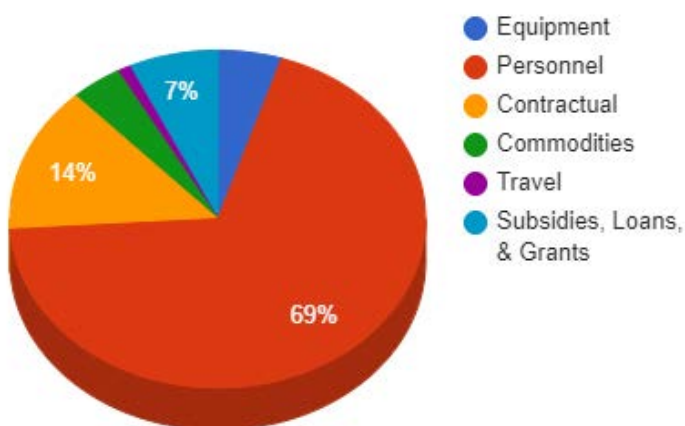


Total Revenues: \$8,203,634
Total Expenditures: \$8,203,634

Percentage Breakdown

- Equipment: 7%
- Personnel: 53%
- Contractual: 21%
- Commodities: 6%
- Travel: 1%
- Subsidies, Loans, & Grants: 12%

GENERAL & SPECIAL FUNDS



Total Revenues: \$15,664,888
Total Expenditures: \$15,656,270

Percentage Breakdown

- Equipment: 5%
- Personnel: 69%
- Contractual: 14%
- Commodities: 4%
- Travel: 1%
- Subsidies, Loans, & Grants: 7%